



**Eddie A. Perez**  
**Mayor**

## **HARTFORD LEADERS SEND MESSAGES OF HOPE TO TROOPS OVERSEAS**

### **---MEDIA AND COMMUNITY RELEASE---**

(May 20, 2008)--- The City of Hartford has embraced a writing campaign that sends messages of hope and safe journeys home to members of the American military stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mayor Eddie A. Perez and members of City Council have shared “Paragraphs of Hope” that can be carried in the pockets of our service people as a way for them to know that they have support here on the home front, that they are heroes, and that everyone wants them to return home safely. This is all part of a one-person community activist campaign that has turned into a national response

Mayor Perez, who shared his heartfelt thoughts in both English and in Spanish, writes, “I salute your commitment to your family and to your country. Without your heroism and patriotism, we cannot move forward a nation. As a father, let me say that you are loved more deeply than you will ever know. As Mayor, let me say that you bring hope and opportunity to others. Thank you for your personal sacrifice and unwavering inner strength. Be proud, be positive, but most importantly, be safe.”

Majority Leader rJo Winch (USAF MSgt, retired) writes, “It was a great pleasure for me to serve this country during my tenure. So, I understand the feelings of our troops and hope only for the best for them, their families, and this country. Be still, be brave, and be confident there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Councilwoman Veronica Airey-Wilson shares this message, “Thank you so much for your commitment and dedication to our country. I have a great deal of respect for the sacrifices you make in keeping us all safe. My perception of a hero has changed over the years. Today, you are the adjective that best describes this word.”

Councilman Pedro Segarra writes, “I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks and my sincere appreciation for your very active participation in supporting our freedom, protecting our citizens and our future. Your courage is very much appreciated by those representing all sides of this extremely sensitive war. I have no doubt that we would not be able to have success without your presence.”

Councilman Matthew Ritter expresses his thoughts: "As Americans, we have much to be grateful for, and at the top of that list is the bravery of our armed forces. We have learned a valuable lesson about courage through your continued sacrifice and unwavering commitment. I thank you for defending our country so steadfastly and pray for your family and your comrades' families each and every day."

Councilman Luis Cotto adds, "I salute you for your service and pray for your safe arrival. I hope that I am vocal enough to demand more services for you and your family upon your return. But, most of all, I hope and pray that I am strong enough to fight for the future of your children so that this war that you fight now will be the last one they know."

"Paragraphs of Hope" is a one-person, non-affiliated, volunteer campaign spearheaded by Christina Mathews Samuda of New Jersey. Mrs. Samuda was born and raised in Panama, Canal Zone, where U.S. military bases were operational before the year 2000. At the present time, she has relatives serving in various branches of the military. She has worked on numerous volunteer projects. Her current one is the "Paragraph of Hope" writing campaign. She emailed government leaders all across the country to submit a message to our servicemen and servicewomen. She has received responses from government officials in Boston, Miami, San Diego, Dallas, Phoenix, Denver, Houston, and Los Angeles, to name a few. However, Christina says that she is very proud of the overwhelming response from Hartford. She now plans to expand her effort to athletes and to the corporate community.

To learn more about "Paragraphs of Hope," you can email Mrs. Samuda at [paragraphsofhope@hotmail.com](mailto:paragraphsofhope@hotmail.com). To read the Hartford paragraphs in their entirety please log on to [www.hartford.gov](http://www.hartford.gov) and go to the press release box--- you'll find them in the news scroll.